

THATCHER STATEMENT TODAY

By JAMES WIGHTMAN
Political Correspondent

THE Prime Minister, who will make a statement to the Commons this afternoon on the Geoffrey Prime spy case, is expected to tell MPs that the case is being referred to the Security Commission which investigates major breaches of the intelligence system.

She is also expected to say that no-one else was involved with Prime.

Although this Government faces the immediate political embarrassment, Prime did most of his espionage in the years of other administrations.

He began by supplying the Russians with secrets in the lifetime of the Labour Government led by Sir Harold Wilson, and continued through the years of the administrations led by Mr Heath, Sir Harold Wilson again, then Mr Callaghan and finally Mrs Thatcher.

The immediate concern of the Government once Prime's spying was uncovered was over the potential damage which it had done to national security.

Ministers were dismayed that his spying had gone on undetected for so long and the case shook their confidence in security at the top secret signals centre at Cheltenham, where Prime worked.